

Report for Congress

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Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress

Updated September 20, 2002

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Report Documentation Page			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE 20 SEP 2002	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2002 to 00-00-2002		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC, 20540-7500			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT				
15. SUBJECT TERMS				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 23
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	

Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress

Summary

For the past 22 years, Afghanistan has been embroiled in conflict. Humanitarian assistance programs have been a key part of the overall multilateral effort to relieve human suffering and assist refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Since September 11, 2001, while actions are still being taken to eliminate Taliban and Al Qaeda forces and others supporting terrorism, the needs have only become more urgent.

The case of Afghanistan may present a special category of crisis, in which the United States and others play a significant role in the war on terrorism while simultaneously providing humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the innocent civilians caught in the crossfire. Moreover, the conditions in Afghanistan represent a challenging mix of infrastructure destruction, ongoing security concerns, and humanitarian needs requiring an immediate response. So far, the international community has recognized that large amounts of aid and resources will be required in the reconstruction effort. In addition, a long-term commitment will be necessary to ensure a stable, democratic Afghanistan emerges and will not fall prey to the twin evils of drugs and terrorism.

While continuing to hunt down Al Qaeda forces within Afghanistan, transitional and reconstruction assistance has also moved ahead. An examination of the progress of reconstruction efforts and aid priorities in the last year reveals the complexity of the tasks ahead and raises questions about the the long-term role to be played by the United States. Congress may continue to look at the contributions by and responsibilities of key allies partnering in the efforts within Afghanistan. The current operating environment demonstrates ongoing challenges for the government and people of Afghanistan and for the international community, such as security issues, population movements, food security, environment and infrastructure, health, and education. While the international donors conference in January 2001 indicated a strong willingness on the part of the international community to assist in the restoration of Afghanistan, it also revealed the cost could amount to more than \$15 billion over the next decade. A total of \$1.8 billion was pledged for 2002, although some pledges have not yet been fulfilled.

The many moving parts of the war on terrorism coupled with the uncertainty of developments within Afghanistan make long-term planning and exit strategies impossible at this stage. Still, of potential, immediate interest to Congress are security concerns, support of the transitional administration, oversight and coordination of aid projects, and the plight of women and children.

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Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress

Although hostilities have not yet ended and the war on terrorism in Afghanistan continues, relief and reconstruction efforts to assist the people of Afghanistan are well underway. International attention has mostly focused on Afghanistan's short- and medium-term future. While questions continue between the United States and its allies about division of labor, burdensharing, and exit strategies, Congress continues to examine the assistance progress, aid priorities, long-term reconstruction proposals, and the implementation role to be played by the United States. Furthermore, Congress considers the FY2003 funding for Afghanistan inadequate and is calling for significantly higher appropriations. A brief overview of the current situation provides a snapshot of the progress to date and the many challenges that lie ahead.

The Situation Before September 11, 2001

Even before the current crisis, Afghanistan had suffered twenty-two years of war, which included a long Soviet occupation, followed by civil war, and, beginning in 1996, harsh Taliban rule in most of the country.¹ With a devastated infrastructure and minimal government and social services, even basic health care and education were almost nonexistent. The Taliban leadership focused available resources largely on maintaining internal security and seeking to eliminate the last pockets of ethnic minority opposition in the North and Northeast. During this internal conflict, the Taliban placed restrictions on women working outside the home, further aggravating levels of poverty. These factors, in combination with a severe drought over the last three years, produced enormous human suffering in Afghanistan.

As of September 10, 2001, according to UNHCR, nearly four million Afghans (out of a total population of about 26 million) were refugees – two million in Pakistan, one and a half million in Iran, as well as others in Russia, India, the Central Asian Republics, Europe, and elsewhere. In addition, as of September 10th, nearly one million other Afghans were internally displaced persons (IDPs) uprooted by drought and conflict.² At that time U.N. agencies were searching for ways to help

¹ For further information, please refer to CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman; and CRS Report RL31389, *Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State* by Richard Cronin.

² Prior to September 11, 2001, the conflicts in Afghanistan left approximately 2 million
(continued...)

five million of the most vulnerable Afghans, i.e., those in critical need of food and shelter. For IDPs this meant providing assistance close to where they lived to help them return to their own homes.

Afghanistan Statistics

- ! The average life expectancy is about 45 years.
- ! Afghanistan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world (1 woman in 12 dies during childbirth).
- ! Over a quarter of children die before reaching age five.
- ! Afghanistan has the lowest per person caloric intake in the world, and the highest per capita number of amputees.
- ! Half of the population is under the age of 18 and has never known peace.
- ! The per capita income is about \$280 per year.
- ! Despite these negative factors, a high fertility rate has caused its population growth rate to exceed 3%. In fact, over two decades of war and destruction, the Afghan population may have grown by a net 10 million, from approximately 16 million (according to a 1975 census) to the current estimate of 26 million.

United Nations (U.N.) agencies, working in coordination with the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and U.N. Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), include the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), U.N. Development Program (UNDP), U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP), U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and U.N. Mine Action Service (UNMAS). International organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and numerous international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Oxfam and Save the Children have also provided relief inside Afghanistan and in refugee camps in neighboring countries.³

² (...continued)

dead, 700,000 widows and orphans, and 1 million children born in refugee camps.

³ There are other actors as well, such as the Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS) which distributes information from surveys, statistics, and maps among many other activities.

The United States has been the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan through its contributions to the UNHCR, other agencies, and NGOs. From 1994 until just recently, the United States did not have a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Afghanistan.⁴ U.S. aid was provided mainly through U.N. agencies and NGOs. Via the WFP, the United States provided more than 80% of all food shipments to Afghanistan during the last fiscal year and more than 47% this year.⁵

Key Developments Since September 11, 2001

The humanitarian situation deteriorated even further following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, “Operation Enduring Freedom,” began on October 7, 2001. Within two months, by early December, many of the Taliban strongholds had collapsed. Fears of getting caught up in U.S. attacks against the Taliban triggered Afghan population flights from major cities both toward rural areas and the country’s borders with Iran and Pakistan, despite the risk posed by land mines and unexploded munitions. Although some humanitarian efforts continued during the height of the anti-Taliban war, most international relief staff also left, making the provision of assistance more complicated. Still, food relief efforts can be credited with preventing a widely-feared famine last winter.

Political Framework

The Bonn Conference and Interim Government. An interim government was formed on December 22, 2001 following a meeting in Bonn, Germany. Led by Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun leader, the new Afghan Interim Administration (AIA) presided over the beginnings of transition to recovery and reconstruction. It ruled for nearly six months before the Afghan *lloya jirga*, or grand assembly, took place in June. The Bonn Agreement also outlined a basic three-year framework for establishing a functioning government and essential institutions in Afghanistan along with immediate security measures to be taken.

The Loya Jirga and Transitional Government. Former King Zahir Shah opened the emergency *lloya jirga*, which was attended by 1,550 delegates and which chose a new government to run Afghanistan over the next two years until a new constitution is drafted and elections are held. The first phase of the *lloya jirga* process got underway on April 15 when several hundred tribal leaders gathered to select district representatives. By June each of Afghanistan’s 381 districts had

⁴ A USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) office was set up in Kabul in June 2001 in response to the regional drought. In June 2002 the office was replaced by the USAID Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) which continues to monitor the humanitarian situation and coordinate the response with the broader humanitarian community.

⁵ See Situation Reports made available by the USAID, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Central Asia Task Force on [<http://www.usaid.gov>].

convened assemblies (shuras) to select district representatives. At the *lloya jirga* Karzai was chosen to lead the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA). The new cabinet had a reduced Northern Alliance representation and established regional leaders as vice presidents. The former King does not hold a formal position in the government. The *lloya jirga* concluded on June 19 without establishing a parliament.

Plans for Security

The International Security Assistance Force. As a result of the Bonn Conference a U.N. mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was installed in Afghanistan in December with 4,500 peacekeepers drawn from 19 countries. Until June it was led by the British (Operation Fingal).⁶ Now under Turkish command, it continues to operate in Kabul and immediate surrounding areas. Its mission is to assist the new ITGA with the provision of security and stability in Kabul, dispose of mines and unexploded ordinance, and eventually train soldiers for an Afghan army. The Kabul airport is open for military flights. Separate from ISAF, the total number of U.S. military personnel on the ground is roughly 7,000 with a focus on logistics, airlifts, and intelligence. U.S. troops and personnel, along with the British and other coalition troops, are continuing the war effort against Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants.

The Afghan National Army. Part of the current security plan includes setting up an Afghan National Army (ANA) for border control and stability. Under consideration is the size of the multi-ethnic army (the latest numbers being discussed are 60,000-80,000), which armed forces would be involved in training, and how the ANA would work with the international forces already in place. As the first units are expected to finish training in 18 months, the provision of security in the interim is also under discussion. A Training Task Force (made up of roughly 150 Special Forces troops plus any troops contributed by allied nations) has completed the initial training of 600 Afghan enlisted soldiers and officers. It is anticipated that a total of 2,500 Afghans will be trained by the end of 2002. Apart from preparation for combat and border patrols, the Afghan forces would eventually be instructed on a set of more complex issues – respect for human rights, loyalty to government, and civilian-military affairs.⁷ Meanwhile, UNDP is setting up a Police Trust Fund to begin making plans for a new national police force.

Renewed Diplomatic Ties

In addition to the United States, a number of countries have reopened their embassies in Kabul. Ambassador James Dobbins was U.S. Envoy to the Northern Alliance from November 2001 to April 2002 and helped coordinate reconstruction efforts. The new U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan is Robert Finn. The current Special Envoy to Afghanistan is NSC Senior Director for the Near East Zalmay Khalilzad. Ryan Crocker has been appointed Charge D'Affaires. The U.N. Special

⁶ See Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom: [<http://www.mod.uk>].

⁷ *The New York Times*, March 26, 2002 Section A, Page 12, Column 6.

Envoy is Algeria's former Foreign Minister Lakhadar Brahimi. The new Afghan government has opened its embassy in Washington with Ishag Shahryar as Ambassador.

The Tokyo Reconstruction Conference

The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan was held in Tokyo on January 21 and 22, 2002, and brought together the AIA and the international donor community with sixty-one countries and twenty-one international organizations represented. This conference provided the means to focus on reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan (more below).

Current Operating Environment

The humanitarian needs and support required for a recovery in Afghanistan must be understood in the context of the continuing vast numbers of refugees and IDPs, the variations among the regions in which they are located, and the political and security situation throughout the country. The collapsed infrastructure, rugged terrain, and extreme weather are significant factors with regard to access, food aid, logistics, and plans for reconstruction. With another winter approaching, the current operating environment is complex with a number of urgent challenges. At a meeting in August, UNHCR Commissioner Lubbers and President Karzai both recognized the need now for stronger links between humanitarian and reconstruction projects so that Afghans can begin to move beyond initial reintegration to more permanent resettlement. Included in the next section are brief references to some recent initiatives under way.

Security Situation

Armed factions are continuing to feud in different parts of the country. The goals of these warlords and other elements are to try to seize local power and territory and maintain profits from drugs and smuggling.⁸ Lack of security is a huge problem throughout the country. In Kabul, despite the protection of ISAF, there have been recent incidents of violence which only highlight the precarious atmosphere at this stage of the recovery.

IDPs and refugees caught in this situation, particularly minorities, face dire choices. If they decide to leave, they become vulnerable and homeless; if they stay, they risk harassment and violence. Reports of human rights abuses, rape, assault, and theft come from different areas. There is great concern about the security of aid workers delivering food and emergency care outside Kabul. Similar reports of theft and beatings have made drivers wary and highlighted the fragile environment under which humanitarian assistance is operating. Stolen food has reportedly been distributed to local residents and military units.

⁸ For further detail on the political and security questions in Afghanistan, see CRS Report RL30588 *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy* by Kenneth Katzman.

The security of the central government has become of critical concern. On July 6, 2002, assassins killed Haji Abdul Quadir, Vice President and Minister of Public Works in Afghanistan. On September 5, 2002, Afghan President Hamid Karzai narrowly escaped an attempted assassination. He had been under the protection of U.S. Special Forces since the death of Haji Abdul Quadir in July.

The Central Government

Clearly related to security are questions concerning the effectiveness of the ITGA in administering the government, facilitating the implementation of recovery initiatives, and addressing broader concerns of security and terrorism throughout Afghanistan. The ITGA faces threats to security from three potential directions.

First, the country's lack of resources have encouraged a thriving drug trade. Before the Taliban, Afghanistan's major export was opium. It produced 75% of the world supply. Under the Taliban, which enforced a ban on opium cultivation in 1999, according to some estimates, opium poppy cultivation dropped from 3,000 tons to 200 tons. However, these numbers are deceiving. It is believed that drugs continued to be a lucrative source of income both for the Taliban and their opponents because large stockpiles built up under Taliban rule, which may well have been intended for the world market, were held back as supply exceeded demand and caused a depression in price. Indeed, this spring may see the largest poppy crop in recent years. Controlling the drug trade is a huge challenge in a country with few other resources and the potential for profits from heroin on the world market. While the Karzai-led interim government has ordered a ban on the production, use, and trafficking of all drugs, the government has little or no power of enforcement. Sources report a recent increase in cultivation linked to lawlessness and banditry on the one hand, and the great need among farmers for some form of livelihood on the other.

Second, former combatants can have a direct impact on humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts. If local struggles for power prevent, delay, or interrupt refugee and IDP returns, this will severely hamper any recovery efforts. Third, Afghanistan's neighbors – Pakistan, Iran, and Uzbekistan – can also play key roles, depending on whether or not they provide support to these local contenders for power.

Population Movements

Population movements continue in and out of and within Afghanistan. It is estimated that there are still 3 million refugees, mostly in Iran and Pakistan. The approximate number of IDPs remaining to date is roughly 750,000. The total number of people requiring relocation assistance is therefore still considerable. In coordination with government initiatives, UNHCR set up voluntary return programs for refugees. Tripartite Agreements on repatriation between UNHCR, Afghanistan, and the governments of Pakistan and Iran, respectively, outline the framework for the voluntary return of Afghan refugees. UNHCR reports that since March 1, more than 1.8 million Afghan refugees have repatriated mainly from Pakistan with some refugees (185,000) returning from Iran. Approximately 10,000 refugees from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have also been assisted in their return. This is double

the number expected by UNHCR and expected to climb to 2 million by year's end. Another 230,000 IDPs have returned to their homes with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The numbers of remaining refugees and IDPs is approximate because there is no formal registration process until they seek assistance for their return. Some date back to previous wars; others are part of the latest wave. There is some "recycling" of refugees—those who repeatedly cross borders for economic and family reasons, flee because of crime and fighting, or migrate because of lack of food. With no sustainable livelihood, many of these refugees are forced to seek assistance either within Afghanistan or outside its borders. There is some concern that the budget constraints UNHCR is facing (already it has had to reduce its welcome home package) may mean inadequate levels of assistance followed by an increase in refugees crossing back into Pakistan and Iran, repeat migration of former IDPs, or an increase in urban refugees. There is particular concern about the conditions within Kabul for recent arrivals choosing to resettle there and the impact on overall stability and security.⁹

Although the rate of return is much higher than expected, it will probably take several years for resettlement to be completed, security permitting. Depending upon what takes place in Afghanistan, the organizations coordinating aid to Afghanistan and the international community may be forced to further accelerate the timetable for repatriation of refugees and return of IDPs or face a reduced return rate. Longer-term care in refugee camps and other measures may be required to allow for recovery to take hold while providing life-saving measures in the form of food, security, shelter, and basic medical care.

Winter Preparation

According to USAID, the ITGA Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AAC) and the ITGA Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) in coordination with the U.N. Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC), U.N. agencies, and NGOs, is putting together a humanitarian assistance strategy in preparation for winter. The two-pronged approach is designed to address urban issues as they affect refugees and IDPs and rural winter access issues. These discussions have included prepositioning of food and non-food supplies in inaccessible areas and a road clearance strategy. In Kabul, U.N. Habitat is conducting a survey of damaged homes to determine approximately how many families might need winterization assistance.

Food Security

Afghanistan has had three years of drought, although there have been periods of precipitation in different parts of the country. A USAID-funded assessment indicates that the drought can be expected to last another 12-18 months. Shifting weather patterns cause mini natural disasters and reduce access to certain areas, caused housing problems at some shelters and camps, and increase assistance and

⁹ U.N. Security Council, Monthly Report on the Operations of ISAF, August 16, 2002.

protection needs. The weather, like the terrain, is varied and harsh and creates “pockets of need” which are difficult to reach by relief agencies.

Food insecurity is likely to continue in many parts of Afghanistan. This in turn may contribute to existing ethnic tensions and encourage further population movements within Afghanistan or across its borders.

The U.S. strategy is to move as much food as possible into villages where people reside. In order to avoid diversion and theft of commodities, most food has been stored in bordering countries and moved into Afghanistan by various means, including trucks, pack animals, and airdrops. Free distribution and food-for-work programs direct the efforts of able-bodied recipients into community development projects. The WFP has conducted rapid helicopter deliveries in highly inaccessible areas. Over six million people will continue to require targeted food assistance. The WFP says it is expecting breaks in its cereal pipeline this autumn and based on the current level of donor contributions, cereals may be unavailable after December. Prepositioning food stocks is a critical part of preparing for winter.

USAID reports that there is enough improved wheat seed for the fall planting season. Lack of water is the most formidable obstacle to food production; lack of fertilizer is also a contributing factor. The FAO and WFP report that 2002 crop yields were increased by 82 percent over last year. The impact of drought and loss of productive assets combined with huge debt and no source of livelihood continue to make food security a high priority.

Environment and Infrastructure

Afghanistan’s environment has also been severely compromised by the war and drought, which has had direct bearing not only on the planting season, livestock production, and agricultural recovery, but more short-term concerns as well. An inadequate supply of water has an impact on basic human needs, such as health, consumption, and shelter (building brick houses requires water). Dried-up wells, poor irrigation practices, and lack of overall water management systems are critical factors. Water shortages are a huge problem as there is not enough water for returnees. Deforestation, lack of energy, and poor infrastructure, including roads and bridges, are also significant factors that present formidable obstacles to reconstruction. The rebuilding of roads, so critical to reconstruction, is now underway. Other projects such as the drilling of wells, the constructing and repairing of irrigation and water-supply systems, and the repair and maintenance of water pumping systems are also being initiated.

The U.N. Environment Program (UNEP) recently began a survey of environmental damage throughout Afghanistan. The UNEP Afghanistan Task Force has put together five teams of scientists and experts who will conduct a fact-finding mission over the next several months. Their mission is to assess the impact of 30 years of conflict on the environment. The news is not encouraging. It is estimated that Afghanistan has lost 30 percent of its forests since 1979 and that its rangelands, watershed, and agricultural areas have also been seriously compromised by “military activities, refugee movements, the overexploitation of natural resources, and a lack

of management and institutional capacity.”¹⁰ Less than 1 percent of the land is protected. Three years of drought have only further exacerbated these problems.

The rebuilding of Afghanistan will have to include the clean up of contaminated sites, sustainable rural development and management of natural resources, and the revival of wildlife and ecosystems. Protection of the environment will improve living conditions for the Afghan people and enhance job creation. In the longer term, the UNEP Afghanistan Task Force plans to determine management strategies, build local capacity through projects and training, develop an institutional framework, and improve compliance with international environmental agreements.

Almost every basic humanitarian need has an environmental component that will continue to be important for the foreseeable future and will require careful planning in the transition to reconstruction. For example, the restoration of electric power either could involve rebuilding conventional, dirty diesel and oil power plants or constructing distributed, clean micro turbines to provide electricity and heat, and the development of wind and solar energy. The provision of clean water could be improved with the reconstruction of wells, development of efficient irrigation systems, and monitoring of water quality. Innovative sanitation and waste treatment facilities could be designed to reduce risks to human health and ultimately destruction to the environment.

Land Mines

Land mines remain a huge problem throughout Afghanistan. Afghanistan is believed to have one of the worst mine and unexploded ordnance problems in the world, with 5-7 million still littered about the country. The Land Mine Monitor estimates that of 724 million square meters of contaminated land, over half, 344 million square meters is classified as high-priority land for agriculture. With over 80% of the Afghan population relying on agriculture for its livelihood, this is a substantial obstacle not only to refugee and IDP returns, but to the basic recovery and reconstruction plans as well.

The ITGA acceded to the Ottawa Convention, which bans landmines, on July 29. As part of the effort to bring attention to the issue, mine awareness sessions are being added to the education curriculum and being conducted within IDP camps at border crossing points.

Health Sector

The WHO, UNICEF, regional health officials, health-related U.N. agencies, and key NGOs are assisting the Afghan Ministry of Health and discussing ways to rebuild the almost non-existent public health services. According to USAID, Afghanistan’s public health facilities cover roughly 12% of what is needed. The

¹⁰ Pekka Haavisto, Chairman of the UNEP Afghanistan Task Force in the UNEP press release. U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs. See [<http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/sasia/afghan/text/0913unep.htm>].

system ranks 173rd worldwide.¹¹ Issues to be covered range from the provision of quality health care, increasing the supply of pharmaceuticals, to health care access for millions of Afghans. A meeting in March outlined an agenda for reconstruction of the health sector. There have been reports of outbreaks of influenza, scurvy, and malaria in several parts of Afghanistan. Tuberculosis is also considered to be a growing problem. Significant health impacts which are symptoms of much larger problems include heroin addiction and landmine injuries. The Afghan Ministry of Public Health, WHO, and UNICEF conducted a polio immunization campaign in early September for nearly six million children under the age of five. In preparation for winter, WHO plans to provide supplies to government clinics in the Central area that are not receiving NGO support. WHO will also initiate mobile health services. For children and infants, particular attention will be paid to Acute Respiratory Infection.

Education and Community Development

The education system, particularly for women and girls, requires a great deal of assistance if schools are to function with even the most basic infrastructure and tools in the upcoming school year. The University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) Center for Afghan Studies, working with USAID, published over 10.6 million textbooks for Afghan students by mid-April 2002. Children have returned to school, despite very poor conditions in many of the schools. The emphasis on revamping the educational system paid particular attention to the role of women and girls, as teachers and students respectively.

UNO's project, America's Rapid Response to Education needs in Afghanistan (ARRENA) project supports educational capacity-building, teacher training, primary, secondary and vocational education in Afghanistan.¹² Other projects are underway to rebuild schools. An assessment is being conducted by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) to design a strategy for building political stability, particularly through community-based programming. Income generation through "food for work" and "cash for work" programs are viewed as important mechanisms for Afghans to increase their income and meet daily food requirements, while making a start on reestablishing themselves within the community.

In addition, through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) the Afghanistan Emergency Information Project provides a daily humanitarian information bulletin for radio broadcast. Up to 30,000 radios were distributed in the spring to vulnerable segments of the Afghan population. An agreement with Voice of America expanded the project's regional capacity and increased its special broadcasts on important information pertaining to the relief effort.

¹¹ Asian Development Bank Newsletter, May 2002. See [<http://www.adb.org/NARO>].

¹² Afghan Freedom Support Act of 2002, Senate Report 107-278, September 12, 2002.

The International Response

U.S. Humanitarian Assistance

According to USAID, during FY2001 the U.S. government provided \$184.3 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan ranging from airlifts of tents and blankets to assistance with polio eradication, from tons of wheat to crop substitution assistance for poppy growers. On October 4, 2001, President Bush announced that the United States would provide \$320 million for FY2002 in U.S. humanitarian assistance to Afghans both inside and outside Afghanistan's borders. Multiple U.S. agencies are providing some form of humanitarian assistance, including USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), USAID/Food For Peace (FFP), Democracy & Governance (USAID/DG), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM), Department of State's Demining Program, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Department of Defense (DOD).

U.S. humanitarian assistance covers a wide variety of aid, services, and projects. As of mid-September, the United States has provided over \$509 million in FY2002 Afghan humanitarian assistance directly through government agencies or as a result of grants to international organizations and NGOs, which goes well beyond the original commitment of \$320 million.¹³

Through the Afghan Interim Authority Fund coordinated by UNDP, donor support is being provided directly to the operations and activities of the ITGA. Humanitarian assistance from other countries has also been forthcoming since October 2001. In May 2002 the World Bank resumed its operations in Afghanistan. While exact figures are difficult to ascertain, both bilateral and multilateral donors have made contributions toward immediate and transitional assistance programs.¹⁴

Transitional Assistance and Reconstruction

International Conference on Reconstruction. UNDP and World Bank officials estimate that the reconstruction of Afghanistan will require \$1.7 billion in the first year, \$10 billion over 5 years, and \$15 billion in the next decade. Others argue these numbers may be low, and put the overall cost at closer to \$30 billion.

¹³ According to USAID, \$103.19 million has come from OFDA, \$157.98 million from Food for Peace, and \$21.66 million is from OTI. In addition, \$38.65 million has come from USDA (distributed through WFP); \$7 million from HDP and \$130.36 from PRM at the State Department; and \$50.8 million from DOD.

¹⁴ This includes redirecting assistance to help meet emergency food, water, and shelter needs of those affected by the March 25 and April 12 earthquakes.

The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo on January 21 and 22, 2002¹⁵ gave the then AIA a chance to demonstrate its commitment to the next phase of Afghanistan's recovery and the international donor community an opportunity to come together and formally demonstrate support for this initiative. The sixty-one countries and twenty-one international organizations represented pledged \$1.8 billion for 2002. The U.S. government alone pledged \$297 million. The cumulative total was \$4.5 billion, with some states making pledges over multiple years and commitments of different time frames. Some countries offered support in kind but with no monetary value. See table below.

Table 1. Pledges from the Tokyo Reconstruction Conference
(U.S. \$ - millions)

Country	Pledge	Time Frame
European Union	495	in the first year
India	100	line of credit
Iran	560	over the next 5 years
Japan	500	over the next 2.5 years
Pakistan	100	over 5 years
Saudi Arabia	220	over 3 years
South Korea	45	over the next 2.5 years
United Kingdom	86	in 2002
United States	297	over the next year

Source: *The New York Times*, January 22, 2002.

The U.S. contribution is just under 25%, about on par with the U.S. share of funding in the United Nations and the World Bank.¹⁶ The United States hopes that other nations will carry a greater portion of the costs for reconstruction and peacekeeping since it has paid for most of the military campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. By comparison, the EU pledged the euro equivalent of \$495 million for 2002, which comes to nearly 30% of the assessed need and amount pledged at the conference. Within this pledge the European Commission also approved an Initial Recovery Program for Afghanistan.

¹⁵ The Asian Development Bank, the UNDP and the World Bank convened a Ministerial Meeting to conduct a preliminary needs assessment for external funding required to assist Afghanistan in its reconstruction efforts.

¹⁶ By contrast, in Kosovo, Congress capped U.S. reconstruction aid to 15% of donor pledges.

There have been some reports that Afghanistan officials have complained about the slow pace at which pledged funds were being paid. In a similar vein, the United States has been critical of some its allies, in particular the Europeans, for not meeting their “fair share” of the cost of recovery and for not doing enough on a multilateral level. On the one hand, determining the “fair share” of the costs of reconstruction for any one country or group of countries varies from conflict to conflict and depends in part on the resources being spent on conflicts elsewhere. On the other hand, the way in which funds are distributed – be it multilaterally through U.N. agencies or bilaterally with funds supporting international organizations and NGOs directly – appears to be at issue in Afghanistan. One argument is that since greater protection is given to refugees and IDPs under the mandate of the UNHCR (as opposed to a specific NGO) donors should give multilaterally.

U.S. Reconstruction Assistance. The U.S. pledge to assist the people of Afghanistan in 2002 is broken down as follows:

Table 2. U.S. Programs to Assist the People of Afghanistan
(U.S. \$ - millions)

Source	Amount	Purpose
Development Assistance/ Child Survival/Health	12	Food security and health assistance and education
International Disaster Assistance	72	Incentives for stability
Office of Transition Initiatives	6	Community development; quick impact projects
PL 480 - Title II (food)	77	Relief and recovery
Section 416 (b)	45	Food for relief and recovery
Population, Refugees, Migration	53	Migration/refugee assistance
Economic Support Funds	17	Development assistance
Other sectors	8	Counternarcotics
Other sectors	7	Humanitarian demining ¹⁷
Total	297	

Source: The U.S. Department of State, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 28, 2002

¹⁷ Donors have pledged \$60 million for humanitarian demining (from Tokyo and before). The United States is putting up \$7 million, Japan \$18.2 million and the EU \$9.3 million. U.S. government sources say that demining over seven years will cost approximately \$670 million.

All funds for the U.S. pledge of \$297 were drawn from existing sources—either from the \$40 billion Emergency Terrorism Response supplemental (P.L. 107-38) that was passed shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks or from regular FY2002 appropriations. The FY2002 supplemental provided additional funds. The U.S. allocation covers humanitarian needs (food relief, refugee assistance) and transition-to-reconstruction initiatives (development assistance, community programs, quick impact projects). Assistance requirements cover a wide range of tasks due to the extreme conditions and complexity of the operating environment in Afghanistan. As such, these initiatives can be viewed along parallel, but integrated, tracks rather than the more usual progression over time from one stage to another.

The new Afghan government has access to funds from other sources as well. According to the State Department, in January 2002, a \$50 million line of credit to finance U.S. projects was granted by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. The Department of Labor will also make available \$3 million to implement job programs.

In addition to the \$297 million in U.S. government funds, the United States has freed up assets frozen when the Taliban regime was in power, including \$193 million of gold in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and \$24.9 million in cash. The Afghan government also has access to an additional \$49.3 million, including \$25 million in other Afghan Central Bank accounts; \$23 million held by the International Transport Association (for overflights of Afghanistan); and \$1.3 million from Ariana Afghan Airlines.¹⁸ In May 2002, President Bush granted Afghanistan “Most Favored Nation” status.

U.S. Legislation

FY2002 Emergency Supplemental. Both the House and the Senate proposed higher aid levels for Afghanistan reconstruction and security funding than the President’s \$250 million request.¹⁹ The FY2002 Supplemental (P.L. 107-206, H.R. 4775) did not set a specific amount for Afghanistan, but it appears that amounts for economic and refugee aid are likely to be at least \$54 million more than proposed, not including funding for narcotics programs or military assistance. The legislation directs the executive branch to report on Afghanistan security and delivery of assistance within 30 days of enactment. The FY2002 supplemental assistance is in addition to the \$297 million in FY2002 funding previously allocated.

Appropriations for FY2003. No figures were provided in the Administration’s request for Afghanistan for FY2003, although the Administration has told Congress that its request included about \$140 million, \$98 million of which would come from Foreign Operations appropriations accounts. The Senate version

¹⁸ The international flight ban against Ariana Airlines was lifted in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390, January 17, 2002.

¹⁹ A portion of the supplemental amount for Afghanistan (\$134 million) was designated as “contingent emergency” funding, which the President did not approve. Afghanistan was not specified in the President’s FY2003 budget amendment of September 3, 2002, in which he sought to restore some of the contingent emergency funds.

of the FY2003 foreign aid appropriations (S. 2779, S.Rept. 107-219) recommends a slightly higher level, \$157 million for Afghanistan, and the House version (H.R. 5410) recommends almost double the request, \$295.5 million.

On September 12, 2002, the Administration pledged an additional \$80 million for road reconstruction, but did not identify where the funds would be found.

The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002. In December 2001, H.R. 3427, to provide assistance for the relief and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and for other purposes, was referred to the House International Relations Committee. The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (H.R. 3994) would provide reconstruction aid to Afghanistan over four years. The bill focuses on creating a stable environment for Afghanistan, addressing such issues as counternarcotics, terrorism, and enforcement, the coordination of U.S. efforts (given its multiple-agency involvement) and humanitarian and relief assistance. The bill was introduced on March 14 by House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde and later co-sponsored with Ranking Member Tom Lantos, and Middle East Subcommittee Chairman Benjamin Gilman and Ranking Democrat Gary Ackerman. The Committee adopted three amendments and approved the bill by voice vote following markup on March 20, 2002. On April 25, it was reported (Amended) by the Committee on International Relations (H.Rept. 107-420) and placed on the House Calendar (No. 250). On May 15, the Rules Committee resolution (H.Res. 419) was agreed to in the House. On May 21, the House passed H.R. 3994 by a vote of 407 to 4. The bill authorizes \$1.15 billion for the period FY2002-05 for reconstruction and military assistance for Afghanistan.

A Senate version of the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, S. 2712, was introduced by Senator Chuck Hagel on July 9, 2002, and referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Hagel offered a substitute amendment to S. 2712. Three amendments were offered to the substitute. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee agreed by unanimous voice vote to order the bill reported, as amended on August 1. The amended bill includes a *Sense of Congress* that calls for an expanded ISAF with an authorization of an additional \$1 billion over two years. It also increases the authorization for recovery assistance to \$2.5 billion over four years (\$2 billion for humanitarian and economic assistance from FY2002-FY2005 and \$500 million for an enterprise fund to encourage private sector development and job creation.) As with H.R. 3994, the bill authorizes \$300 million in drawdown authority for military and security assistance to Afghanistan and to certain other countries. “The intent of Congress is to authorize up to \$3.8 billion [over four years] in new money and not to draw money from a static pool of international aid.”²⁰

The main differences between the two versions appear to be in the amount and time frame of funds authorized; issues of statutory authority and congressional notification; specific programmatic difference in matters such as military drawdown authority, funds for an enterprise fund, and eligibility for assistance (foreign countries and international organizations); scope and size of U.S. participation in the ISAF; and

²⁰ Afghan Freedom Support Act of 2002, Senate Report 107-278, September 12, 2002.

requirements with respect to U.S. personnel involvement in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Issues and Questions for Congress

Security

If reconstruction is to be a success, most observers believe it must occur in a secure environment without threat to the new government and initiatives on the ground. As U.S. troops make headway on finishing the Afghan phase of the war, there are many questions about ensuring a secure environment for reconstruction. Extending past Kabul for reasons of security, aid distribution, and reconstruction initiatives, and the credibility of the ITGA is critical. Can peace occur without U.S. involvement in the peacekeeping effort? How involved will the U.S. troops be in assembling and training an Afghan army? What role should the United States play in drug enforcement and the war on terrorism inside Afghanistan?

Many believe a peacekeeping force is essential and the United States must be part of such a force. Until recently, the Bush Administration has been adamant that it will not take part in a peacekeeping force in Afghanistan. However, the U.N. has called for more foreign troops to disarm various groups and control warlords. The recent upsurge in conflict suggests the possibility that the U.S. decision may be reconsidered. Under the current mandate, peacekeepers are in Kabul and have no impact outside the capital. Some argue that the ISAF is too small and too limited to be effective. Amid discussion about the type of peacekeeping force required has been the question of how long peacekeepers will be required to stay.

There remain the twin evils of drugs and terrorism, inextricably linked, but requiring different forms of intervention and enforcement. Moreover, in addition to cracking down on the problem itself, alternative forms of livelihood are critical, such as crop substitution, community projects, and other programs to benefit those directly involved in these activities.

Central Government

Critical to Afghanistan's recovery in the short term and stability in the long term is the credibility and effective functioning of its government. Moreover, the ITGA is facing the critical need for economic revitalization, accounting and banking mechanisms, and debt relief for the average Afghan. It must be able to pay regularly the salaries of its police, army officers, and public employees. It is crucial that it be able to extend its governmental institutions outside Kabul. What role will the United States continue to play in helping to build administrative capacity in the form of a national government and institutional development? What is the United States currently doing to help the Afghan government function and prepare for its next phase?

Oversight and Coordination of Aid Projects

In order to keep the support of the international community, reconstruction efforts need to demonstrate the effective use of funds and their distribution. What is the United States doing to make sure aid is being spent wisely? What role is the United States playing to facilitate international collaboration on oversight and coordination of aid projects? How is the United States coordinating its various agencies participating in reconstruction efforts?

From coordination mechanisms to a system of accountability, future donations in Afghanistan depend on the way in which current funds are used and whether they reach those for whom they are intended. Although the work of the U.N., international organizations, NGOs, and governments will be critical, the sheer number of actors on the ground create some concerns about aid assistance and how projects will be managed and coordinated.

Few rules exist about how donor money is to be spent. Moreover, the lack of experience by the ITGA coupled with its many competing priorities (not least of which is that a financial infrastructure is not yet in place), mean that assistance and guidance on monetary matters (including agreements with lenders and contributions by donors) by the international community remain critical.

Recently, a new structure to manage the international assistance effort was put in place. The Program Secretariat Structure (PSS) is designed to replace the “Lead Agency” approach seen in other complex humanitarian emergencies. It is meant to hold U.N. agencies and international organizations accountable within their sectors of responsibility. It is also part of a broader effort to include Afghan organizations in the recovery and reconstruction effort which will be important for the transfer of responsibilities and capabilities in the future.

A number of U.S. agencies are involved in the relief and recovery effort in Afghanistan. Important to the overall understanding of the U.S. role in Afghanistan are the coordination mechanisms in place for this wide range of agencies in its day-to-day activities on the ground and in Washington and the ability to track overall spending by the USG.

Evaluating Aid Priorities

As nine months have passed since many of the Taliban strongholds collapsed and the international community began the relief and recovery effort in earnest, what does a report card on Afghanistan reveal? What are the most critical obstacles to furthering the goals of assistance and reconstruction? Has the international community’s assessment of what it will take for Afghanistan’s recovery changed in terms of time and funding required?

So far, there is little development-type aid in the U.S. pledge, although some is focused on quick impact programs, long-term agriculture, women and children, and education. Is it any clearer where the United States should concentrate its aid priorities and efforts? With what level and mix of assistance?

Burdensharing

There have been reports that the United States is providing more than its share of the multilateral relief and reconstruction effort. The European allies, in particular, have been sited as not providing enough support, and even then, spending their money directly through European NGOs. These organizations are usually outside the protection regime available through multilateral agencies such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Why have foreign donors been slow to come up with the necessary funds? Is the problem related to bureaucracy in Europe or are there impediments in Afghanistan itself that make donors reluctant to give immediately?

Women and Children

The Taliban treatment of women and restrictions it imposed not only severely curtailed the work force, but reduced women's basic rights, education, and access to health. On December 12, 2001 Congress passed the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001 (S. 1573, P.L. 107-81) to address some of these concerns. A Ministry of Women's Affairs has been established within the ITGA. Schools reopened in Afghanistan in March 2002 and girls returned to the classroom for the first time since the Taliban came to power. How much impact will this legislation have on reconstruction initiatives specifically focused on women and children? To what extent will their needs be a primary point of focus in aid distribution and the recovery effort? What are the barriers to the implementation of women's projects?

Collateral Damage

Extensive press coverage from the bombing campaign in Afghanistan revealed that there have been a number of innocent victims of erroneous U.S. bombings. While the hunt for the Taliban and Al Qaeda continues, the potential for mistaken targets remains a risk. In recent months claims of erroneous bombing targets have raised the question of victim compensation and U.S. responsibility and also highlighted the difficulty of intelligence gathering and security problems on the ground. Although statutes and legislation exist to protect victims of war, these are typically worked out on a case-by-case basis. The issue is blurred by the recognition that the end result may not be a matter of simple human error, but rather a complex combination of factors for which it is more difficult to determine responsibility. Collateral damage includes civilian losses, considered to be a by-product of war, despite efforts to minimize innocent civilian casualties. Language in the FY2003 Senate Foreign Operations bill refers to Afghan civilians suffering injury from military operations and recommends assistance that is available under the Patrick Leahy War Victims Fund be used to provide "rehabilitation and related assistance." Should legislation be developed specifically for Afghan citizens who are victims of collateral damage? How should individuals be compensated either for injury or death of a family member? Under what circumstances? Should a separate fund be made available to these victims and who should administer it?

**Table 3. International Security Assistance Force
Participating Countries as of July 31, 2002**

Country	Manpower
Austria	71
Belgium	19
Bulgaria	32
Czech Republic	132
Denmark	36
Finland	31
France	520
Germany	1121
Greece	163
Ireland	7
Italy	403
Netherlands	232
New Zealand	8
Norway	17
Romania	55
Spain	349
Sweden	38
Turkey	1322
United Kingdom	426
Total	4982
Headquarters Staff - Turkey	51
Headquarters Staff - Other Countries	45

Source: UN Security Council, Monthly Report on the Operations of the ISAF, August 16, 2002.